

Waterfowl season comes early this year

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Commission adopted the 1987-88 waterfowl hunting regulations in a public hearing held in Austin.

The seasons and bag limits are similar to the previous year, but federal frameworks allowed addition of one day to the duck season in the eastern portion of the state and two days in the western portion.

Shooting time is one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. In the eastern portion of the state (including Colorado County), the duck hunting season is Oct. 31-Nov. 4, and Nov. 21-29, 1987, and Dec. 12, 1987 through Jan. 17, 1988. In the High Plains Mallard Management Unit of West Texas and the Panhandle, the season is Oct. 31-Nov. 8, and Nov. 21, 1987

through Jan. 17, 1988. There will be no changes in the 100-point system of duck bag limits. The point values are: 100 points each for mallard hens, mottled ducks and black ducks; 70 points for redheads, wood ducks, hooded mergansers, and fulvous and black-bellied whistling (tree) ducks; 20 points for blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, cinnamon teal, gadwall, scaup, wigeon, shoveler and mergansers (except hooded mergansers); and 35 points for all other ducks not listed, except the season is closed on masked ducks and canvasbacks.

The coot season will be concurrent with the duck seasons, and the bag limit is unchanged, at 15 per day, 30 in possession.

Goose Season
The season for light geese (snow, blue and Ross) in the eastern portion of the state is set for Oct. 31, 1987 through Jan. 24, 1988; season dates for dark geese (Canada, black brant and white-fronted) are Oct.

31-Dec. 4, 1987, and Dec. 12, 1987-Jan. 17, 1988. The bag limit is five light geese plus one Canada or black brant and one white-fronted goose per day, for a maximum total of seven geese. The possession limit is twice the daily bag limit. The seasons for sandhill cranes are Zone A, Nov. 14, 1987-Feb. 14, 1988; Zone B, Nov. 28, 1987-Feb. 7, 1988; Zone C, Jan. 2-Feb. 7, 1988. Colorado County is located in Zone C. The bag limit is the same for all three zones, three per day, six in possession.

In addition to regular license requirements, a special permit is required for hunting sandhill cranes. These permits will be issued at no charge upon written request to the Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744. The name, address and county of residence of each person issued a permit must be provided. The season dates for woodcock are Nov. 21, 1987-Jan. 24, 1988; bag limit five per day, possession limit 10. The season for common snipe (Wilson's or Jacksnipe) is Oct. 31, 1987-Feb. 14, 1988; bag limit 8 per day, possession limit 16.

G. G. Club has prime hunting areas
The G. G. Hunting Club begins its eighth year with expanded hunting leases, according to owner Gayle Gertson.

He has acres of prime hunting areas in the Eagle Lake, Lissie, Bonus and Egypt areas for duck and goose hunting. Experienced guides will be provided for your hunt as well as white spreads, decoys and parkas so your hunt will be an enjoyable and successful one. Only morning hunting is available.

Gertson has guided in the past for other clubs and knows all the tricks of getting the birds within shooting range. For reservations, call (409) 234-5863 or write to Rt. 1 Box 224-A, Eagle Lake, Texas 77434.

Nov. 7-Feb. 28 season

Quail bag limit increased to 16

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission has authorized a daily bag limit of 16 quail per day for the November 7-February 28 quail hunting season in Texas.

Last season's limit was 12 per day. The department staff recommended the increased bag limit because August quail surveys indicated improved quail populations in most areas of the state. The possession limit is 45 quail.

Don Wilson, upland game program leader for the department, said weather conditions have been

better than average for quail production during the past two years, allowing the birds to rebound from low populations caused by the freeze in the winter of 1983-84.

The 1987 median counts, completed during August, showed that quail populations are at record highs in South Texas and the Cross Timbers of West Texas.

The median count in South Texas was 39 birds per route, the highest on record and considerably better than last year's 29 median count.

In the Cross Timbers, the survey found 34 birds, also an all-time high. The previous record was 22 birds in 1983. Last year the median count was only 13 quail per route.

The Rolling Plains, which produces consistent quail numbers from year to year, showed a count of 28.5, or about the same as last year. A median of 23 or over is good. To put this year's Rolling Plains median in perspective, it was about seven times better than the 1984 count of four birds per route.

Proper care of birds assures better eating

Upland birds — quail, dove, pheasant, turkey, woodcock or rail — are popular game for Texas hunters. Proper care of birds in the field and during cooking assures tasty meals for the family table.

Several steps must be taken immediately following the kill to maintain top eating quality. Game should be field dressed as soon as possible. For larger birds, such as pheasant and turkey, use a knife to cut a slit just below the breastbone and down to and around the vent. Remove all contents of the body cavity. Avoid breaking the gall bladder sac on the liver. Save the

gizzard, heart and liver for eating. Place giblets in a plastic bag. Cut near the base of the neck and remove the crop.

Wipe the body cavity clean with a moist cloth and rinse with water. Moisture spreads bacteria which cause spoilage. Most hunters remove the two oil glands found on the upper surface of the tail or they remove the entire tail structure. Cool the bird by allowing air to circulate in the body cavity. A small stick inserted in the cavity will help hold it open to speed cooling. Place the birds in a cooler if the outdoor temperature is not cold.

Dove hunting closes November 18

The South Zone mourning dove season, which opened September 20, will continue through November 18, except in the special white-winged dove hunting area near the Rio Grande, where the season closes November 14. The North Zone will close on November 9 and the Central Zone closed October 30. Both the Central and South zones have a winter season of January 2-11.

Mourning dove hunters are

reminded that a fully-feathered wing must remain attached to the carcass of any dove taken in the South Zone, until the bird reaches its final destination.

Also, state regulations allow hunters to take two white-winged doves as part of their 12-bird mourning dove daily bag limit. However, hunters are required to possess a \$6 state white-winged dove stamp to take whitewings in any zone.

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